

Japanese subtropical Islands

From **31/5/2022**
to **7/6/2022**

Ship: **LE SOLEAL**

From **Keelung (Chilung)**
to **Naha, Okinawa**



PONANT is the first cruise company to take you to the heart of the sublime landscapes of **the tropical islands in southern Japan** during an **expedition cruise**. On this **all-new 8-day itinerary** aboard *Le Soléal*, from **Taiwan to Okinawa**, you will discover the rich natural heritage, traditional villages and craft of the **Okinawa archipelago** and the **Ryukyu Islands**.

As you depart from the Port of **Keelung**, in **Taipei**, the capital of the lush island of Taiwan, you will set sail for the southern islands of Japan, including **Ishigaki**, the capital island of the Yaeyama Islands. You will be able to enjoy the dynamic atmosphere of the eponymous city or discover Kabira Bay, renowned for its idyllic scenery, combining crystal-clear turquoise water and beaches of white sand.

Le Soléal will then sail towards the magnificent **Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park**. Here wild beaches mix with traditional villages and lush, protected and intact, tropical forest: jungle, mangroves, rivers, waterfalls. This unique biodiversity is made up of many endemic species.

You will also call at **Iheya Island**, Okinawa's northernmost territory, where the traditional culture of the region is preserved. You will be able to discover a few aspects of this through a traditional "Eisa" show featuring traditional drums.

Your final port of call will be **Zamami**, in the Kerama Islands. You will enjoy the unspoiled beauty of this pristine island, known the world over for the distinctive blue of the surrounding sea, called "Kerama blue". The sea life in the area is also exceptionally rich and sea turtles can often be spotted swimming among the coral.

Your cruise will draw an end in **Naha**, your port of disembarkation, on the island of Okinawa.



The information in this document is valid as of 7/7/2021

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

KEELUNG (CHILUNG)

Embarkation 31/5/2022 from 16h00 to 17h00

Departure 31/5/2022 at 17h00

On the north-east tip of **Taiwan**, the harbour city of **Keelung** stands on one of the most beautiful coasts on the island. Nearby is the spectacular natural park of **Yehliu**, famed for its striking rock formations. It's easy to tour the city's historical sites on trails that cross the lush green hills surrounding the harbour from Chung Cheng Park to Fort Ershawan, you can enjoy superb views of Keelung and the coastline. But the main attraction is the **Miaokou night market**, where you can taste some typically Taiwanese culinary delights.

ISHIGAKI

Arrival 1/6/2022

Departure 1/6/2022

Located to the south of the main island of the **Yaeyama archipelago**, **Ishigaki** boasts all the aspects of an authentic **piece of paradise**. You've guessed it, you don't come here for its skyscrapers but for its pure emerald waters and idyllic beaches. The waters off Shiraho, on the island's south-west coast, have one of the largest areas of blue coral in the world.

IRIOMOTE-ISHIGAKI NATIONAL PARK

Arrival 2/6/2022

Departure 2/6/2022

Situated in the **Yaeyama Islands**, in the far south-west of Japan in the Okinawa Prefecture, **Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park** was established in 1972 and covers 125 km² (48 square miles). The park includes the islands of Iriomote and Ishigaki, the Sekisei lagoon which connects the two islands, as well as Hatoma and Hateruma, two islands in the lagoon. Iriomote is a heaven for explorers, with rivers running through it and 90% of the island covered in subtropical forest. You may get to glimpse an Iriomote cat or a crested serpent eagle, two endemic species. Visitors particularly appreciate Ishigaki for its stunning beaches and its exceptional seabeds, which form Japan's largest coral reef.

MIYAKOJIMA

Arrival 3/6/2022

Departure 3/6/2022

Situated between the East China Sea and the Philippine Sea, **Miyakojima** is the main island of the Miyako Islands, in the **Sakishima archipelago**. The fourth largest island in the Okinawa prefecture, it is known for its many sugar cane plantations and some of Japan's most beautiful beaches. **Myriad multicoloured fish** await you during unforgettable

swims and snorkelling.

KUMEJIMA

Arrival 4/6/2022

Departure 4/6/2022

Located 90 km (56 miles) to the south-west of **Okinawa Honto**, **Kumejima** is a multifaceted island home to natural treasures. **Hatenohama**, a stunning 7 km-long (4.3 miles) fine-sand beach, promises wonderful carefree moments discovering the exceptional underwater worlds off the coast of Kumejima. **Mifuga**, a rock formation on the north coast of the island with a hole right through its middle, is a great example of the erosion along the coast. The eastern peninsula offers another geological feature, visible at low tide: 1,000 flat rocks each around one metre (3.2 feet) in diameter, formed by the contraction of lava from a nearby eruption a million years ago. They create a rocky plateau resembling a traditional Japanese tatami, hence the name **Tatami-ishi**.

IHEYAJIMA

Arrival 5/6/2022

Departure 5/6/2022

The northernmost island of the prefecture of Okinawa, **Iheyajima** is a small territory that will take you back in time. At the heart of preserved natural landscapes that are a reminder of the Okinawa of the past, the inhabitants perpetuate traditional culture, particularly by maintaining ancient rites and ceremonies in honour of the divinities of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The island is home to several historic sites, such as the tomb of the ancestors of King Sho Hashi, the unifier of Okinawa and founder of the Ryukyu Kingdom, which was independent from Japan until the end of the 19th century. In this natural setting, whose emblematic Nento-Hiramatsu pine tree is a national monument, perhaps you will enjoy the privilege of seeing a traditional "Eisa" drum performance.

ZAMAMI

Arrival 6/6/2022

Departure 6/6/2022

Zamami is an island in the **Kerama** archipelago, 40 km (25 miles) west of **Okinawa Island** in the China Sea. Visitors to this 16 km² (6 mi²) quasi-uninhabited isle are enchanted by the many untouched natural treasures they find here. You will discover a tranquil island with lush vegetation, lined with stunning white-sand bays bathing in the glimmering 'Kerama blue' waters around the archipelago. Zamami is also renowned for the beauty of its coral reefs, where multicoloured fish engage in an endless mesmerising ballet. The observation deck on Mount Takatsuki reveals stunning views of the Kerama Islands, granted national park status in 2014. With subtle shifting shades of azure above and all around, this island truly is paradise.

NAHA, OKINAWA

Arrival 7/6/2022

Disembarkation 7/6/2022 at 07h00

Capital of Okinawa Prefecture, the town of **Naha** is located on the south-west of the island. You'll love its lively

atmosphere, particularly along **Kokusai Dori**, otherwise known as 'international street'. The picturesque **Makishi Public Market**, nicknamed 'Naha's kitchen' offers a profusion of colourful fish, Okinawan foodstuffs and local spices and you can sample delicacies cooked on the spot.